USGA, ClubCorp work to prepare fabled Pinehurst No. 2 for U.S. Open

By Peter Blais

The United States Golf Association is working closely with Pinehurst Club Management and the ClubCorp staff to prepare and maintain the Pinehurst No. 2 course for the 1999 U.S. Open.

"I've been going to Pinehurst for 10 years, so agronomically, I think we're set," said Tim Moraghan, who oversees course preparation for U.S. Open events for the USGA Rules and Competition Committee and was superintendent at Pinehurst Course Nos. 3 and 5 in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

"When we do our course preparation memo, we set the guidelines as far as fairway widths, cutting heights, green speeds and that sort of stuff. I'll work with [Pinehurst Director of Golf Course Maintenance] Brad Kocher and his staff to make sure those guidelines are met. Paul Jett, the on-course superintendent for No. 2, and I have been working together for four years. He knows what we want. We just don't want to have any problems the week of the event...Inside the ropes it will be a piece of cake. They know exactly what I want and I know exactly what they can do."

Said Jett: "Some of the old stories of the USGA coming in and running things have either been blown out of proportion or hasn't happened in this case. Tim Moraghan, [USGA Director of Rules and Competition] Tom Meeks, myself, Brad Kocher and [Pinehurst Assistant Director of Golf Course Maintenance] Bob Farren have worked closely together getting the course set up. The only thing they [USGA] has asked for is fairway widths; contours to be a certain way; a certain height of rough; and no rough around the greens, which we didn't have to begin with. Outside of that, they come in every two to three months, I'll take Tim or Tom around.

The USGA's major concern prior to the Open will be how the new G-2 bentgrass that was selected as a putting surface years ago holds up, Moraghan explained. "There were they've been fine with everything we've done."

Pinehurst has hosted numerous major championships over the years including the 1989 U.S. Women's Amateur and the 1994 Senior Open.

"We felt through the Women's Amateur and the Senior Open that the greens were not as good as they should be," Moraghan said. "We were a little skeptical about bringing the U.S. Open to Pinehurst with the condition of the putting greens. Pinehurst asked, 'If we rebuild them, will we get the Open?' The USGA said 'Rebuild them and we'll see.' They did it and boom, it's a done deal. They came out wonderful."

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SIGNET MOVES ON ATLANTA

ATLANTA — Chestatee developers McRae & Stolz and partner Brian Ferris have selected Signet Golf Associates to manage the community's golf club. Chestatee's 18-hole, daily-fee course is being designed by Denis Griffiths and is slated to open late this spring.

TSC
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Shop Operations survey.

In addition to Diamond Back and Wachesaw Plantation, TSC also manages John Daly-designed Wicked Stick Golf Links and Deer Track Golf Resort in Myrtle Beach, River Bend Links in Tunica, Miss., and the Country Club of Beaufort (S.C.). The firm also has a consulting/management contract on a course in Black Lake, Mich.

"We're trying to grow at a deliberate pace," Schaal said. "We'd like to grow at a couple courses a year for three to five years... And we are looking at properties outside of the Carolinas.

"The consolidation trend in the golf industry will continue. Our company strategy is to be sensitive to alliances wherever we can. We're also building alliances when we do new projects. That's the case in Myrtle Beach and unilaterally across the country. We're aligning ourselves with golf courses similar to the ones we operate in Myrtle Beach, plus the accommodations people.

Schaal, Steven Taylor and F. Darrell Childers are the three principals in the Myrtle Beach-based firm. The three originally teamed up as investors in Wicked Stick, where they also consulted during construction and assumed management when the course opened in 1995.

Schaal has more than 25 years experience as a golf course owner. He is a PGA pro, past president of the PGA of America and has been involved in the ownership and operations of Deer Track, Indigo Creek Golf Club, Wicked Stick, Cotton Creek Golf Club and Country Club of Beaufort.

Taylor, with more than 25 years of business experience, anchors the management side of TSC. His expertise is in business planning, budgeting and financial management, with experience in golf course construction, maintenance and management.

Childers' expertise is in personnel and resources. He has more than 20 years experience in the day-to-day operations of golf organizations.

The firm provides any level of service from feasibility studies to turnkey design-build-manage agreements.

Cobblestone
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Texas: The Hills CC, Live Oaks Golf Course and Yaupon Golf Course at the Clubs of Lakeway, Austin; Whistlone GC, Benbrook; Stonebridge CC and The Ranch CC, McKinney; Trophy Club DFW, Dallas/Fort Worth; Lost Creek Golf Course, Aledo; and Woodcrest CC, Grand Prairie.

American Golf was allocated 23 courses. National Golf acquired ownership of 20. The American Golf properties are located in Arizona, California, Georgia, Texas and Virginia.

They include:

Arizona: Alwahateau CC, Phoenix; The Foothills GC, Phoenix; The Lakes at Alwahateau, Phoenix; Red Mountain Ranch CC, Mesa.

California: Balboa Park GC, San Diego; Carmel Mountain Ranch, San Diego; Eagle Crest GC, Escondido; El Camino CC, Oceanside; Saticoy Regional GC, Ventura; The Vineyard at Escondido, Escondido.

Georgia: Trophy Club of Apalachee, Dacula; Trophy Club of Atlanta, Alpharetta.

Texas: Blackstone GC, Frisco; Los Bios CC, Plano; Pecan Grove Plantation CC, Richmond; Ridgeview Ranch GC, Plano; Thorntree CC, Desoto; Sweetwater CC (2 courses), Sugar Land; Woodlake CC, San Antonio.

Virginia: Brander mill CC, Midlothian; Kiskishen GC, Williamsburg; Virginia Oaks GC, Gainesville.

GEI, an American Golf subsidiary, operates Sweetwater Country Club, Blackstone Golf Club in Frisco, Texas is to be built.

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Some things that offer true performance and speed require special maintenance.

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